# Organisation of work: modernising. Follow-up of the Green paper on Partnership COM(1997)0128

1998/2226(COS) - 25/11/1998 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: to define a framework to modernise work organisation in the Community. CONTENT: this communication aims to stimulate and strengthen partnership with a view to modernising work organisation. It invites the social partners at European, national and sectoral level to consider the best possible means to facilitate and complement the implementation of the adaptability pillar of the employment guidelines and to develop at appropriate levels a framework for action on this subject. It is built on the responses to the green paper "partnership for a new organisation of work" (COM(97)0128) which triggered a lively debate on this subject across the EU. The Commission's intention was not to use the green paper as the basis for a legislative initiative but to launch a debate in order to develop a new approach based on partnership and taking account of continuous change in modern working life. The Commission undertakes in this communication to identify a strategy for the modernisation of the organisation of work comprising the following stages: - stage 1: the social partners should seek to establish some common objectives, giving consideration to the fact that the current objectives of the European Union are competitiveness and employment. In this context, the idea is to achieve improvements in productivity through better organisation of work and to reconcile firms' need for flexibility with workers' need for security; - stage 2: could be to establish a process for joint initiatives for modernising work organisation. Social partners would be invited to negotiate agreements, including at European level, to modernise the organisation of work within the framework of the employment guidelines for 1999. The aim would be to review the regulatory and legal employment framework and to find the most suitable industrial solutions. At the same time, the social partners would be called upon to address a number of issues still pending: ensuring proper training, developing working time packages in a comprehensive framework (circumstances in which new working time arrangements, including training leave breaks, might be beneficial etc.), facilitating the diversification of working relations and new forms of work (while providing security to workers), ensuring the optimum conditions for the introduction and uptake of new technologies, promoting workers' motivation and adaptability through increased involvement and promoting equal opportunities. Within this partnership process, the public authorities would be directly involved by reducing and simplifying administrative and tax burdens on SMEs and re-examining the obstacles to employment. New types of employment contracts should also be examined. Finally, the communication sets out the role of the EU within this framework, especially in the form of suitable intervention under Community programmes or the structural funds (e.g. the ESF). It also makes provision for measures to adapt and simplify Community legislation on companies (e.g. the transfer of businesses directive or the directive on supplementary pensions). The communication calls on the social partners and the Member States to take stock of this strategy at the Vienna Council and to give their response in time to influence the 1999 employment guidelines.